DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 292 583 PS 017 272

AUTHOR Barry, Eleanor
TITLE Improving Observation Skills of Child Care Workers through the Systematic Use of Selected Techniques.
PUB DATE 87
NOTE 79p.; Ed.D. Practicum, Nova University.
PUB TYPE Dissertations/Theses - Practicum Papers (043)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Check Lists; *Child Caregivers; *Classroom Observation Techniques; *Day Care; Early Childhood Education; *Economically Disadvantaged; Inservice Teacher Education; Instructional Development; *Paraprofessional School Personnel; Photographs; *Teacher Responsibility; Workshops
IDENTIFIERS Event Sampling

ABSTRACT

It was noted that paraprofessional child caregivers working with economically disadvantaged children did not base instructional choices on data derived from direct observations. As a result, this practicum was implemented to improve the observation and recording skills of five caregivers serving as group leaders of day care workers. Centers involved were operated by the public schools in an eastern, industrialized city. Practicum goals were to: (1) provide participants with information and experiences indicating the importance of observation and recording in early childhood programs; (2) provide opportunities to practice observational techniques; and (3) emphasize the importance of systematic observation for program planning. Observational techniques selected as most appropriate to workers' abilities and work situations included use of checklists, event sampling, and photography. To achieve the goals, a series of workshops and field experiences were implemented. Participants practiced the techniques in their classrooms during the 3 months of the practicum. Evaluation data indicated that all five participating child caregivers improved, but improvements were uniformly low. All participants, however, felt they had improved significantly. Related materials are appended. (RH)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

PRACTICUM REPORT

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☒ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Center for the
Advancement of Education
Ed.D. Program

ED292583

PS017272

Improving Obervation Skills of Child Care Workers through the Systematic Use of Selected Techniques

by

Eleanor Barry

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Eleanor C. Barry

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

3301 College Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, Florida 33314
305/475-7300

NOVA UNIVERSITY

Improving Observation Skills of Child Care Workers through the Systematic Use of Selected Techniques

by

Eleanor Barry

Cluster XX

A Practicum I Report Presented to the Ed. D. Program
in Early and Middle Childhood
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Education

NOVA UNIVERSITY

1987

PS 017272

PRACTICUM APPROVAL SHEET

This practicum took place as described.

Verifier: Louise R. Brennen
Louise R. Brennen

Associate Superintendent of
Elementary and Middle Schools
Title

Pittsburgh Board of Public Education
341 S. Bellefield Street
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213
Address

26 January 88
Date

This practicum report was submitted by Eleanor C. Barry under the direction of the adviser listed below. It was submitted to the Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education at Nova University.

Approved:

4-18-88
Date of Final Approval

Georgianna Lowen
Georgianna Lowen, Ph.D., Adviser

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
TITLE PAGE	i
APPROVAL PAGE	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	iii
LIST OF TABLES	v
ABSTRACT	vi
CHAPTER	
I INTRODUCTION	1
Description of Community	1
Author's Work Setting and Role	2
II STUDY OF THE PROBLEM	4
Problem Description	4
Problem Documentation	5
Analysis of Causes	6
The Related Literature	7
III ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS	17
Statement of General Goals	17
Behavorial Expectations	17
Evaluation Instruments	18
IV SOLUTION STRATEGY	20
Description and Evaluation of Solutions	20
Description of Selected Solutions	23
Report of Action Taken	29
V RESULTS	32
Results	32
Conclusion	45
Recommendations	46
Dissemination	48
REFERENCES	49

TABLE OF CONTENTS (Continued)

Page

APPENDICES

A - End of the Month Reports: Summary and Comparisons 52

B - Progress Report, Examples 54

C - 12 Item Evaluation Instrument 55

D - Sample Reliability Check Form 58

E - Telephone Interview Questionnaire 61

F - Improvement Index 64

G - Projected Time Table and Actual Time Table. 67

H - Excerpts From Practicum Log 71

I - Summary of Workshop: Hand-Print #5 75

J - Evaluation Matrix 77

K - Questionnarie: Systematic Observation. . . 79

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
1	Preferred Observational Techniques	31
2	Demonstration of Competencies Scores	35
3	Competency Scores	36
4	Item Scores	37
5	Reliability Checklists Scores. (Percent of Agreement)	39
6	Event Sampling (Reliability Scores: Percent of Agreement)	40
7	Event Sampling (Reliability Scores of Components)	42
8	Improvement Index	43

Abstract

Improving Observation Skills of Child Care Workers through the Systematic Use of Selected Techniques. Barry, Eleanor C., 1987: Practicum Report, Nova University Ed. D. Program in Early and Middle Childhood.

Descriptors: Classroom Observation Techniques/Critical Incident Method/Data Collection/Ethnography/Lesson Observation Criteria/ Naturalistic Observation/Observation/Participant Observation.

This practicum addressed the need to improve the observation skills of child care workers. In the writer's experience child care workers lacked the requisite skills for observing and recording children's behavior and were unaware of useful techniques.

The writer's goals were: (1) to provide child care workers with information and experiences relevant to the importance of observation and recording in early childhood programs; (2) to increase the competence level of child care workers by helping them acquire practice and skill in observational techniques; and (3) to articulate for child care workers the need to use systematic observation as a foundation for program planning. To achieve these goals the writer implemented a series of workshops and field experiences that focused on the three selected techniques: checklists, event sampling and photography. These observational techniques were practical tools appropriate to the child care workers' abilities and work situations. Participants practiced the techniques in their own classrooms throughout the duration of the practicum.

All five child care workers who took part in the practicum improved, but the improvements were uniformly low. However, all participants felt they had improved significantly.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Board of Education of this heavily industrialized city of half a million people has been a prime sponsor of a day care program, funded in part by the Department of Public Welfare, for more than 17 years. There was at that time - and continues to be - an urgent need for day care services for the working poor of the inner city. From a sense of mission and the desire to reach children at an early age, the Board of Education undertook the operation of a day care program, parallel to its Head Start program, already in operation for five years.

Description of Community

The day care centers are located in the poverty pockets of this river city, a city of hills and valleys where dilapadated houses crowded on the hillsides form drab, isolated neighborhoods. All of the day care centers are located in areas where at least 13% of the population is living in poverty. Each of the neighborhoods where the ten day care centers are located has a distinct flavor of its own, depending on the racial or ethnic mix and the level of poverty. Each center is administratively attached to a school. The

centers are in unused first floor classrooms or in demountable two-room buildings located in the school yard. The classrooms are bright and cheerful, auspiciously equipped with toys and games that intrigue children. The curriculum is an emerging one based on the developmental needs of young children, and play is the vehicle for learning. The staff is hard working and concerned about the welfare of little children. These care givers often live in the very neighborhood where they work and identify closely with school and neighborhood. Their values and child rearing practices often are in conflict with the informal approach where children are encouraged to explore and experiment with all kinds of materials. The indirect teaching mode and the role of the teacher as facilitator baffle them.

Author's Work Setting and Role

Initially, the day care centers were staffed with a lead teacher with a bachelors degree and special preparation for teaching the preschool child. She was assisted by paraprofessionals, high school graduates with no special preparation beyond a two-day orientation and on-the-job help from supervisors. For many of these paraprofessionals this was their first job. They began as teacher assistants, food service aides, or even bus aides. Some took advantage of college courses offered by the University, the fees being paid for by the Department of Welfare. After four years of operation, owing to budget and funding problems, the

professional staff of the day care program was replaced by paraprofessionals. Those aides who had taken advantage of college courses and had earned sufficient credits to meet minimum requirements for child care workers, were appointed as Group Leaders and Assistant Group Leaders. These simple but sturdy women, now in positions of leadership, were supported in their efforts to become teachers of young children by the Child Development Consulting Team of the University. The consulting team worked with the day care staff for a number of years, presenting theory and practice from several vantage points, using experiential approaches. With virtually no turnover, one would have expected that it would be possible to build on the staff's growing knowledge and experience toward a finer and more sensitive service. Although there have been improvements, the increments in growth have been small.

The writer directs the program, administers the budget, manages the records and reports, supervises the staff. She is assisted by a secretary, a social worker and a coordinator. She reports to the Associate Superintendent responsible for elementary and middle schools.

CHAPTER II

STUDY OF THE PROBLEM

Problem Description

The challenge each year is to meet the individual needs of children, to foster their optimal development, to use the limited resources in behalf of the children. This challenge can only be met by an informed, skillful staff who thoughtfully plans the daily program, selecting activities and experiences that enhance children's growth. Meeting the needs of the children requires a goal-directed program that rests on thorough knowledge of the children in the group. The program, instead, seemed to be planned in terms of activities appealing to the staff at the moment. Seldom was the program planned in relation to the needs and interests of particular children.

It was felt that if the child care workers were to strive to plan their daily program with group goals and goals for individual children based on the observations of children, they would be more aware of children's learning needs, more sensitive to their troubles and joys, more responsive to their triumphs and setbacks. The activities and experiences would begin to become program tools to meet

children's needs. The program more would more often reflect children's growing and learning: there would be evidence of progression in programming.

The problem was that the child care workers did not use the observations of children to provide input to formulate goals, to select activities or to choose appropriate procedures for working with individual children.

Problem Documentation

Even a cursory review of program records indicated that the child care workers were not aware of children as unique, thinking and feeling persons. The "End of Month Report", submitted by each Group Leader every month, rarely referred to individual children. The emphasis was on program activities in all areas: in describing "Highlights of the Month", in setting goals, and in discussions at weekly staff meetings. (See Appendix A.)

The "Bi-Monthly Progress Report" written for each child throughout the year indicated superficial responses to children's behavior. Labels were used without detailed description to support the label, labels such as "aggressive", "withdrawn", "creative". (See Appendix B for a typical sample of a "Bi-Monthly Progress Report".)

From regular observations at the centers and discussions with the day care staff it is apparent that children's interactions and their encounters with the environment are overlooked. The focus was on materials and equipment and

the management of routines and transitions. The qualities of individual children's experience were lost in the swirl of the day's activity.

Analysis of Causes

To write a plan seemed an awesome task. To use the insights gained from observations of children at work and play to develop a program plan was demanding and perhaps, beyond the child care workers' capabilities. Observation required an educated eye and a sensitive ear which obviated superficial responses to children and feelings of sympathy or hostility toward certain kinds of behavior. The key to good observation also required the ability to record what was observed accurately in vivid, graphic language. While the child care workers seemed to have an adequate knowledge base to understand what they saw and could make inferences, they lacked an appreciation of the importance of child study. There was still a preoccupation with materials and activities, but attention to children's activity and how they react seemed to be of less importance. Many child care workers did not wholeheartedly accept the premise that a valid curriculum could be build from the needs and interests of children. As a result, observations were casual and seldom recorded.

Keeping records of children's progress seemed to be difficult for the staff. They were reluctant to write anything

but sparse notes, probably because they were unsure of their ability to write. To put ideas and understandings into written form was a commitment which many of our care givers were unwilling to assume.

The Related Literature

Many professionals agree that the observation and interpretation of children's behavior are essential skills persons working with young children must have. Jean Phinney (1982) writes that observation contributes to the professionals understanding of individual children and corrects biases and distortions. She remarks that we are apt to generalize and predict too much yet observe too little. She feels that teachers need to develop a coherent picture of individual children based on direct observation and knowledge of child development. Teachers (and child care workers!) need to make use of observations of children's behavior in the natural setting of the classroom and revise and update their view of each child as new events occur. "Doing this well requires the ability to spot significant behaviors that provide clues to a child's underlying traits, attitudes or abilities. Good informal observations need to have the clinician's sensitivity to significant behavior without sacrificing the researcher's rigor and objectivity." (Phinney, 1982, p. 17.) She points out that teachers use observation in a different way from that of researchers whose goal is to identify general prin-

ciples or relationships that hold for all children while practitioners use observation "to understand specific children and to gain information on how to direct, guide, teach or respond to them." (p. 16.) She discusses the qualitative and quantitative aspects of several observation methods and concludes "the ability to understand children through observation might be compared to the ability to judge fine art." (p. 23.)

Cliatt (1980) provides a checklist for observing children's play. Observing children's play, she writes, reveals children's interests which enables the teacher to plan activities that stimulate learning. The teacher can also discover areas needing reinforcement and by noticing recurrent themes she can assess a child's emotional needs. Observing individual children provides the teacher with the child's view of the world as well as a view of how he sees himself.

Strahan (1983) discusses some of the contributions ethnographic research has made toward enriching naturalistic observational techniques developed by anthopologists. Particularly, he discusses the role of the teacher as a participant-observer. He writes that the participant-observer's purpose is to participate and describe, to reflect and record. He provides a descriptive matrix as an aid for structuring the teacher's observations. He suggests that the teacher functioning as a participant-

observer record one or more dimensions of the matrix (e.g., participants, actions, space, time, feelings, goals) for a few minutes each day. Records such as these then become a means for testing intuitive insights. Another approach he suggests is for the teacher to ask herself questions such as these: What are my goals? How am I reacting to events? What decisions am I making? How am I making them? This introspection, he believes, is a critical source of information. By recording her perceptions the teacher becomes more aware of herself as a participant and more aware of the setting and the other participants.

Linder (1976) describes a successful training procedure to provide experience for child development students to gain skills for sensitive observation. His goal is for the students to become better child watchers, better recorders, and more attuned to the needs of children. Linder and his students set up a stimulating environment, and while children explored the room and the novel materials, the students observed and recorded children's behavior, using their preferred observation techniques. They observed first the total group, then a single child and finally a learning center. Prior to this class, students made predictions - e.g., What would be the most popular toy? How long would a child stay with a task? What size group would form in a given center? In the follow-up session students shared their findings which led to inferences and generalizations

- e.g., suggestions for setting up an environment for children; the relationship of observation to planning for children; the role of teacher in the selection of equipment; how observational skills help teachers to take advantage of each child's interests, to diagnose abilities, to suggest learning opportunities that need to be provided.

While Linder felt his training procedure for teaching observational skills was successful, Nelson (1982) found that students using a learning package or module did not learn observational skills any more effectively than students who were taught the skills without the benefit of the module. The goal of Nelson's study was the development and field testing of an individual module which college students could use independently with minimal class and instructor time to develop skill in the use of narrative observation techniques as a tool in analyzing children's play behavior. The students studied four techniques: diary description, specimen description, time sampling and event sampling. They analyzed their observations according to a theoretical framework represented by Erikson, Curry and Arnaud, Parten and Sutton-Smith. Nelson believed that narrative observation could be taught successfully through the use of a module. She felt the building of observation skills would enhance awareness of the more subtle aspects of children's play behavior resulting in an improved ability to interpret children's play and leading to more appropriate

guidance and planning. Nelson theorized that the failure to achieve more significant results was due to the inability of students to function efficiently "with the self-pacing feature of the module...the responsibility for pacing, completing assignments, and, indeed, learning, cannot be handed over to the student...There must be guided, on-going, humane interaction between student and instructor if meaningful learning is to take place." (Nelson, 1982, p.96.)

Raskin, Taylor and Kerckhoff (1975) provide a guideline to help teachers become aware of and sensitive to certain behavior patterns which have diagnostic significance. The guideline is concrete and detailed, organized into categories which are critical for the prediction of academic, social and psychological difficulties. By recognizing and objectively recording the behavior indicated in the guideline, teachers can play a valuable role in the assessment of children's development. The authors point out that the key to improved teacher observation and reporting is the use of non-judgemental description.

Sandra Anselmo (1977) from the University of Iowa describes the use of vignettes as a successful way of teaching observational skills. "Vignette" is defined as "the account of a particular meaningful event in the child's interaction with other persons or with an environment in which children are free to be themselves." (Anselmo, 1977, p. 133.) Through the preparation of vignettes, which are recorded after a sig-

nificant event occurs, the teacher learns to recognize salient aspects of behavior: "...at this early point in the development of observational skills, it is helpful to ask student teachers to look for vignettes that reflect important areas of education or development. For example, student teachers may be asked to focus on language or peer influence...specificity provides a sound foundation on which to increase teaching competency and sensitivity to the needs of children." (p. 134-135.) Teachers, she writes, can concentrate on interacting rather than observing. A series of vignettes of a child's activity which illustrate developmental milestones and educational goals can be the basis for constructive discussions with colleagues or parents.

Accurate observation is difficult when the teacher is involved with an active group of children. However, through photography "we can stop the action and take a more profound look at children." (Fein, 1978, p. 45.) Pictures catch details difficult to remember or to put into words. Photographs capture subtle expressions or gestures and help teachers recall children's behavior more vividly. Fein writes, "Permanent rather than fleeting impressions provided me with the opportunity to recognize and analyze children's activities and feelings." (p. 45.) It is not necessary to be a highly skilled photographer. It requires only the use of a camera with film that has a fast shutter speed and then

to snap pictures that record classroom happenings and children's reaction.

Ziller and his associates consider photography in child study an invitation to understanding, a medium for conveying messages with emotion. "The use of photography facilitates understanding because we are compelled to abandon the comfort of a relatively denotative verbal communication system for a more connotative visual communication system." (Ziller et al., 1981, p. 275.) The approach to understanding the problems of a child through the language of photography is novel since the subject of the study is directly involved in the process. The focal child is asked to describe himself by taking (or having someone else take) ten photographs that tell who he is. Since the content is under the control of the subject the photographs yield relevant and meaningful perceptions. The child knows more than he can tell through words. The researchers study the content of the photographs striving to know the child as well as he knows himself.

As important as it is to try to perceive a child as he perceives himself, it is crucial for teachers to understand how they themselves see the children in their classrooms. Greta Morine-Dershimer (1979) quotes Bruner: "...the concepts we use to organize our world form the basis for observations, our thinking, and most probably, our actions." (p. 43.) She notes that teachers' conceptions of children are responsive to the contextual factors of the time of

year, the setting, the curriculum-management system; to the composition of the class, the type of pupil, their characteristics. Using sorting techniques to study these aspects she found there are changes in a teacher's conceptions over time which reflect changes in tasks and responsibilities. Early in the year separation and adjustment are a focus; in June the concerns are achievement and children's progress.

Teachers' perceptions of children and the cues they respond to are a function of personality and involve the processing of information. (Bruce, 1979.) The way information is processed is affected by the flow of cues (the number, the kind, verbal, non-verbal), by the processing (the relevance to the teacher's concerns, her comprehension, the action required). The stimulus field of the classroom is complex and the process of selectivity is established by the teacher. Bruce points out that the processing for relevance is a sorting process where it is determined whether or not the stimulus has sufficient meaning to warrant immediate action. The teacher is the one who establishes the task and shapes the activities.

Teachers process information continuously and make decisions based on children's behavior. McNair (1979). Interested in how teachers make decisions while teaching, she studied teachers' natural, inter-active decision-making behavior. She observed them and interviewed them. She asked them to recall what cues they attended to that

resulted in a shift in approach or activity. Her findings indicate that teachers were most concerned with what the child was doing or saying. Teachers made "inflight decisions" based on these cues and concentrated on "fine-tuning" the activity and its content.

As well as using observation to understand children, teachers also use observations to guide their teaching. (Quisenberry, 1979.) Observations can serve to help them improve their own teaching. Feedback from children, concrete, specific and credible reactions to her teaching, can help the teacher become aware of problems and lead to change. By being reflective and monitoring her own behavior she can identify focal areas for teacher development.

Williams (1978) presents a system of observation to help the teacher analyze and correct causes of classroom conflict. Working with a supervisor, the teacher recalls the scene from memory, writing down the conflict situation in vignette form, detailing the communication behavior of the child and the teacher. The inappropriate messages are decoded with the help of the supervisor who provides direction and support. Together, teacher and supervisor, address themselves to the detection, analysis and correction of causes of the communication break-down. This observational system provides the teacher with an objective framework for the analysis of communication failures.

Bailey (1977) feels there is much to be gained in teachers developing their own classroom observation instruments as an aid to self-assessment. He has found that self-made observation instruments are equally or more valuable than, for example, Flanders' Interaction Analysis. To develop a self-made instrument that considers teaching behavior in an in-depth way is an arduous process. However, the teachers Bailey worked with discovered that the intensive examination of teaching behavior led to a better understanding of individual teaching styles. The teachers' evaluation of their own teaching fostered a sense of pride and internalized the importance of self-assessment. The process was time consuming and was not error free. But, Bailey concludes, such a process can be critical for continued growth. Difficulties can be overcome or minimized by focusing on a small number of teaching skills, setting a regular time for self-assesment (daily, weekly) and taking a problem-solving approach.

In searching for articles addressing observation and recording these aspects were touched upon: communication skills, photography, decision-making, information processing, play behavior, para-linguistic behavior, observation instruments, effective teaching. The disciplines included the following: Adult Education, Anthopology, Ethnography, Special Education, Sociology.

CHAPTER III

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES AND EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

Statement of General Goals

The following goals were projected for this practicum. The general goal was to improve the skills of child care workers in the use of observation techniques as a tool for selecting appropriate activities for preschool children. The child care workers would be able to demonstrate their skills in observing children's play behavior by translating visual information into written data that was accurate, objective and expressive. They would be able to explain or give meaning to the behavior observed and recorded.

Behavorial Expectations

1. Child care workers would demonstrate skill in observing, recording and interpreting children's behavior using checklists, event-sampling or photography.
2. Child care workers would be able to observe accurately with a high degree of reliability.
3. Participants would be able to describe how their observation and recording skills had improved.

Evaluation Instruments to be used were:

1. Child care workers were to present a case study and demonstrate the appropriate use of two of the observation techniques as measured by an evaluation instrument with 12 items, each item on a five point scale. (Appendix C.)
2. During the course of the practicum reliability checks were to be used to measure accuracy and reliability. (Appendix D.)
3. Participants were to be interviewed at the beginning and at the end of the practicum to determin whether or not they felt they had become more adept in observing and recording children's behavior. The questions were to be open-ended to allow for an expression of affect and a richness of detail concerning their experience. (Appendix E.)

The following Standards of Achievement were projected:

1. Mastery of 75% of the evaluation criteria as rated by two evaluators would indicate success.
2. Eighty percent agreement on the final reliability check between the child care worker and the observer paired with her would be an acceptable standard of success.
3. Since open-ended questions would provide materials difficult to quantify, attention would be paid to

the feeling, tone and positive improvement as perceived by participants. Questions in the interview would be treated as separate measures to yield an index of improvement. (Appendix F.) Those questions which probed similar attitudes would be grouped together. The acceptable degree of improvement would be four of five participants attaining the level of four on scale Q1, Q3 and Q4. On Scale 6 an acceptable standard would be 7.

CHAPTER IV

SOLUTION STRATEGIES

Description and Evaluation of Solutions

The literature is replete with descriptions of observational methods that deepen understanding and add breadth to the teaching experience. Phinney (1982) discusses the values of on-going, direct observation in the natural setting of the classroom and points out that consistent observation provides a coherent picture of the child but requires the teacher's perceptiveness and objectivity, knowledge and rigor. She sounds a clarion call for would-be observers to build and refine their skills.

Developing the skills of observation, interaction and analysis is not easily achieved and demands sustained effort over time. Several writers, Strahan (1983) and Bailey (1977) among them, describe the benefits accruing to the teacher when she examines her own observation and recording practices. Strahan states that using a matrix for describing, recording and reflecting makes the teacher-observer keenly aware of herself as a participant in the classroom and heightens her awareness of the children against the backdrop of the enviornment. Bailey sees the development of teacher-designed

observation instruments, which evaluates teaching behavior, as vital for the teacher's continued growth. Quinsberry (1979) takes another tack. She believes that the teacher can use feedback from the children themselves to identify areas needing improvement. These approaches are stimulating and challenging but tangental to the observation and recording of children's behavior.

Other writers address the problem of how teachers respond to behavorial cues, process information and make decisions. (Bruce, 1979; McNair, 1979). The cues teachers respond to in a classroom involve contextual features of the environment together with the characteristics of the individual children. These aspects as they impinge upon the teacher can be studied by means of sorting techniques. (Morine-Dershimer, 1979). The sorting technique is useful in helping the teacher answer the question "How well do I know the children in my classroom?" In addition, the studies discussed by these researchers provide background information for understanding selectivity factors inherent in observation. Being aware of them helps reduce bias.

It is important for many teachers to gether information about children as efficiently and effectively as possible. A checklist provides a written record that gives a clear view of selected aspects of behavior in a tabulated form. Cliatt (1980) and Raskin and her associates (1977)

have devised checklists designed to collect data for different purposes. Cliatt's checklist to be used for the observation of play enables the teacher to assess children's interests and needs; Raskin's checklist makes it possible for the classroom teacher to identify behavior patterns critical for the prediction of developmental difficulties. Both these checklists, easy to use and functional, provide the teacher with information related to significant features of children's growth and development. But the use of checklists is a first step toward appraisal and assessment.

The vexing question is: How do you help teachers, care givers and child care workers develop insight and the necessary skills to build word-pictures of individual children that can be a guide to action? Linder (1976), Anselmo (1977) and Nelson (1982) confront this very problem but approach it from different avenues: Linder had his students set up a unique classroom as a setting for observing children responding to unfamilar toys and games; Anselmo taught her students to use vignettes, short descriptions of significant events, in order to gradually acquire skills; Nelson designed and field tested a learning module for the development of skill in narrative observation and the analysis of play behavior. Williams' method (1978) for the analysis of conflict situations is essentially an event sampling technique using an antecedent-behavior-consequence format to uncover the

the causes of communication breakdowns between teacher and child. All four of these researchers present techniques that have the advantage of providing rich details, allowing the child's behavior to be described in context, leading to in-depth understanding. And because the written observations are composed of carefully crafted language using concrete, vivid, sensory words, the meaning of the child's behavior is conveyed and understood.

Understanding a child through the language of photography is another way to understand a child because photography as a recording tool can be a medium for conveying messages with emotion. (Ziller et al., 1981). Photography can capture fleeting impressions and be more telling than words might be. (Fein, 1978). The technique is compelling, but there is certain to be difficulties in making inferences and interpreting the photographs.

Descriptions of Selected Solutions

Because of the child care workers' limitations (degree of motivation, variation of skills, reading and writing ability, learning styles) observation methods were selected that did not demand copious writing yet were interesting and yielded useful information. Previously, in their work with the consulting team the child care workers had been taught the use of specimen records and anecdotal notes. But their resistance and the reality of the day care adult/child ratio

(1:10) made it difficult, if not impossible, for them to use these methods systematically. And because of their problems in writing clearly and vividly they record unskillfully.

Since paraprofessionals seldom are keen observers they lack an awareness of the uniqueness of the boys and girls in their classrooms. (In the writer's experience this is a common problem.) Morine-Dershimer (1979) in her exploration of how teachers process information about children used a sorting technique. She asked the teachers to group the children who behaved in similar ways and to form as many groups as necessary to describe each sub-group's characteristics and then to group the children in other ways. Sorting tasks helped the practicum participants to think about the children in their classrooms, to consider particularly their differences and their similarities. These tasks enabled the care givers to check their perceptions since they were considering children from several vantage points. The use of this method proved to be a practical way to sensitize the child care workers to children's individual differences. And so the stage was set for the work ahead.

Linder (1976) in teaching his students to develop skills for sensitive observation of children had the students set up a stimulating environment equipped with novel

materials which they were challenged to provide - every day items to appeal to children's imaginations, materials that require problem-solving and active exploration, that suggest imaginative uses and capture young children's interest.

Since his students' involvement and investment were required, observation and recording tasks were carried out with zest and had impact. His description and discussion of this introduction to observation suggested that this was an excellent way to help child care workers observe carefully. However, even though worthwhile benefits would accrue to the practicum participants from such an activity, owing to problems in logistics, visits to specially selected centers were substituted.

One center was in a modern school designed for open education, a school almost without walls where "pods" (classrooms) located on several levels and overlooking each other are connected by ramps. There is generous use of plants, sculpture, paintings and high tech materials. The other visitation site was a center located in a former warehouse on the river's edge in a small suburban community. All the equipment and most of the toys for the center were built by neighborhood volunteers. The outdoors was developed for children's delight and discovery by a group of student landscape architects. Observing at both centers provided the

element of novelty which gave the practicum participants a new look at children and their play. These opportunities sharpened observation in a way similar to that experienced by Linder and his students when they observed children playing with the intriguing objects in their experimental classroom which they had arranged.

The checklist suggested by Cliatt (1980) built on the two aforementioned activities. Cliatt's checklist for observing children's play interests in a conventional classroom served to aid participants' awareness of the dimensions of play, and therefore was appropriate for beginning observers to use.

But checklists have disadvantages: they do not capture the dynamics of behavior, the richness of details. The running record or specimen record is able to preserve descriptions of behavior; the context and the sequence of events can be reviewed and analyzed at a later time. Nelson (1982) comments "Clear, descriptive observation data depends not only on students' ability to see and hear the behaviors taking place, but also on their written communication skills." (p. 92). For this reason the use of specimen records was not included as a method of observation in this practicum. However, the method Nelson employs to teach her students to analyze children's play behavior by relating the behavior to the play theories of Erikson, Parten, Curry and Sutton-

Smith is stimulating and would help the practicum participants learn to explain and interpret observed play behavior. The writer believed the method was not beyond the capabilities of the child care workers. However, the group floundered when it came to analyzing children's behavior and explaining its meaning. The plan to have the participants relate behavior to theory was not realized. However, Parten's theory of social participation was incorporated in the checklist used as a basic observation tool.

Phinney (1982) notes that the choice of a particular observation technique represents a compromise made between qualitative and quantitative aspects of the method. The specimen record is an example of a method that provides qualitative information, the checklist a method that yields quantitative data that can be summarized and used for comparison. Event sampling, on the other hand, is a technique that yields information about a group or individual. By recording only events of interest (e.g., separation, social overtures, quarreling) the observer can collect much information with relatively little writing. The event can be recorded in three or four sentences after its occurrence. It can describe the way a behavior sequence begins, unfolds and concludes. It was anticipated that skill in writing would improve as more and more events were recorded.

Also, the understanding of children would increase as events were recorded and reflected upon.

Vignettes as described by Anselmo (1977) also build these abilities but required the observer to be able to make judgements about significant behavior. At this point the writer felt that the child care workers were not ready for this. Learning to use event sampling stretched their abilities sufficiently.

The use of photography in recording which Fein (1978) and Ziller et al. (1981) describes has possibilities as a valuable tool for the child care worker in this program. Several years ago with the help of an interested supervisor some of the workers developed a leaflet for the Week of the Child using snapshots to tell the story of a child's day in day care. The remembered excitement and sense of accomplishment generated by this project suggested that photography as a recording tool should be used in the on-going assessment and evaluation of children's progress.

Three methods - checklists, event-sampling and photography - were a better match for the child care workers' learning styles and abilities. By exploring and experimenting with the three methods questions were answered, ideas generated, and detailed word-pictures and telling snapshots resulted, leading to a greater appreciation of individuality.

Action Taken

Five of the ten Group Leaders, randomly selected, participated in a study group to work on the problem of the how and why of observing and recording. The focus was on"learning together", the tone pleasant, the pace relaxed, but purposeful. To provide continuity and maximize learning the group met for three consecutive weeks of each of the three months for the duration of the practicum. In developing content it was necessary to slow the pace considerably in order to review and clarify observation and recording methods and procedures. Vacation schedules interrupted the practicum, but the practicum was resumed and brought to a close by meeting two afternoons the first week when all participants had returned to their centers and two afternoons the second week. This allowed for a review and the "teach-back" sessions which were used to evaluate what they had learned during the practicum. It was also possible to schedule a visit to Visitation Site 2 for the three participants who had missed the previous visit. (See Appendix G for topics covered and schedule adjustments).

It was anticipated that three reliability checks would be done during the course of the practicum and that the Assistant Group Leader would also be using the checklist and event sample techniques, having been taught how to use these observation and recording methods by the Group Leaders. This

was not feasible as the Group Leaders themselves were having so much difficulty learning to use the tools. Instead, two reliability checks were completed by the Group Leader and the writer. In addition, the writer observed the Group Leaders' use of the two methods and conferred with them regarding difficulties, misunderstandings and insights. Dawn, one of the participants commented: "(I) found it useful when you and I both observed together. (It) helped me find a way of working it out."

In the main, group sessions were carried out as planned. The format was as follows:

Anticipatory Set
Stated Objectives
Learning Activities
Observation Assignments for the following week.
Summary and Preparation of a Feed-back Sheet.

But, goodly blocks of time had to be included for the participants to share the pleasures and frustrations of their experience. Also, there was a clear need for ample guided practice and discussion. The feed-back sheet came to be known as "Hand-Prints" because they were hand printed, duplicated and distributed immediately. Also, an important part of each

session was the evaluation task, a different format presented each time for the sake of variety and to sustain interest.

The flavor of the group's give-and-take can be gleaned from an excerpt from the practicum log, a sample hand-print and an example of an evaluation matrix included in the Appendix. (Appendix H, I, J).

CHAPTER V

Results Conclusions and Recommendations

RESULTS

The focus of the practicum was the enhancement of child care workers' skills in recording and reporting observations of individual and group behavior. Three methods - checklists, event sampling and photography were chosen because the writer came to the conclusion that these methods were a better match for the capabilities and competencies of the day care staff than other narrative observational techniques.

At the end of the practicum the culminating experience for the participants was a demonstration of their competencies: each presented a study of a child utilizing information gleaned from a systematic use of two observational techniques over approximately a three week period. Their selection of techniques follows:

Table 1.
Preferred Observational Techniques

Particants	Checklist	Event Sampling	Photography
Dawn	*		*
Deirdre	*		*
Edie		*	*
Genvieve	*		*
Liza	*	*	

It is interesting to note that four of the five participants chose checklists to demonstrate their competencies. They felt checklists were functional and relatively easy to use. Also, they yielded a range of information about the children. Genvieve said, "First I thought all Drew did was bite, spit and cuss, but after observing him I found he had many interests; big blocks, sand, water and play with a baby doll, and he likes to look at books and hear stories...His special friend is Richie."

Three chose both checklists and photography as the preferred observational tools. All four who selected photography used photography to highlight, to corroborate, to supplement their findings.

Only Dawn and Lisa were experienced photographers who routinely took snapshots of the children and their activities and shared them generously with the children's parents. Dawn, like the others, avidly experimented with photography as a way of recording. "...You know I've always taken pictures; now I know to look at them closely for hints to follow up."

Liza did not select photography to present her case study for she felt the checklists helped her see the child as a member of a group and she was challenged by the method of event sampling. Event sampling, although difficult, told her more, gave her more insights regarding the very behavior she was concerned about.

It is interesting to note that four of the five participants chose checklists to demonstrate their competencies. They felt checklists were functional and relatively easy to use. Also, they yielded a range of information about the children. Genvieve said, "First I thought all Drew did was bite, spit and cuss, but after observing him I found he had many interests; big blocks, sand, water and play with a baby doll, and he likes to look at books and hear stories...His special friend is Richie."

Three chose both checklists and photography as the preferred observational tools. All four who selected photography used photography to highlight, to corroborate, to supplement their findings.

Only Dawn and Lisa were experienced photographers who routinely took snapshots of the children and their activities and shared them generously with the children's parents. Dawn, like the others, avidly experimented with photography as a way of recording. "...You know I've always taken pictures; now I know to look at them closely for hints to follow up."

Liza did not select photography to present her case study for she felt the checklists helped her see the child as a member of a group and she was challenged by the method of event sampling. Event sampling, although difficult, told her more, gave her more insights regarding the very behavior she was concerned about.

The goals of the practicum were to improve the observation skills of child care workers in using selected techniques, for the child care workers to be able to demonstrate their skills in observing, recording and interpreting children's behavior and to do so with reliability. Another goal for the five Group Leaders who participated in the practicum was that they be able to describe how their skills had improved. A discussion of the results gathered from the case study presentations, an analysis of the reliability checks and an analysis of the improvement index follow.

As each participant presented her study the writer and a colleague took ample notes using the 12-point scale of the Evaluation Rating Form (Appendix C) as a guide. They then discussed their notes, point by point, achieved a concensus and rated each demonstration on the 12-point scale. A display of the scores follows:

Table 2.
Demonstration of Competencies Scores
(Appendix C)

	Items												
(Participants	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total
Dawn	3	3	2	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	5	2	44
Deirdra	4	3	3	4	4	5	4	3	5	4	4	3	46
Edie	3	4	4	4	3	4	3	3	4	4	4	3	43
Genvieve	3	2	3	4	3	4	2	3	4	4	4	3	39
Liza	4	4	4	4	5	5	4	5	5	4	5	4	54
Totals	17	16	16	20	19	23	17	17	23	20	22	15	

Highest possible score was 60 points. A score of 45 or above would meet the objective for indicating success.

Only two, Deirdre with a score of 46 and Liza with a score of 53, achieved this standard. Although Dawn and Edie almost attained the anticipated standard of success, Genvieve fell six points below, while Liza was eight points above.

To look at this another way:

Table 3.
Competency Scores
(Appendix C)

Participants	(Scores expressed in percentages)
Dawn	73%
Deirdre	77%
Edie	72%
Genvieve	65%
Liza	88%

The difference between Genvieve's and Liza's score is striking. Liza brought much skill and ability to the experience. Listen to what Lizs says, "I have always recognized the importance of recording children's behavior. I am able to remember details vividly, but you do not attend to it all with the same depth unless you adopt a system. I see the in-between children now." And Genvieve who was so eager to learn, said at the beginning, "I keep it all in my head (information about children's behavior) - believe it or not! I'm not a very good writer, so I don't write anything down." At the end of the practicum she made these comments: "It's still hard for me. I'm not at the place where I can observe

without responding to the children. I just do it. (observe and record) I notice more. I have more insight, but I keep revising what I thought I knew." Genvieve may have scored the lowest, but in the writer's opinion, Genvieve learned the most.

Considering the scores, item by item, presents some tantalizing information:

Table 4.
Item Scores
(Appendix C)

Item		Score	%
12	Ability to explain meaning of behavior.	15	60%
2	Identify salient factors that affect observation.	16	64%
3	Explain the role of interpretation.	16	64%
1	Analyze the importance of observation.	17	64%
7	Identify the advantages and disadvantages of checklists.	17	68%
8	Identify the advantages and disadvantages of event sampling.	17	68%
5	Describe the characteristics of event sampling.	19	76%
4	Describe the characteristics of checklists.	20	80%
10	Demonstrate the appropriate use of Method 1.	20	80%
11	Demonstrate the appropriate use of Method 2.	2	88%

It is evident that the participants became knowledgeable about photography as an observational and recording tool and also became successful in its use (Items 9, 6 and 2.) Certainly, they were fascinated by studying the snapshots they took of the children:

Edie - "Even when I cut off the heads, I look at the hands, the posture..."

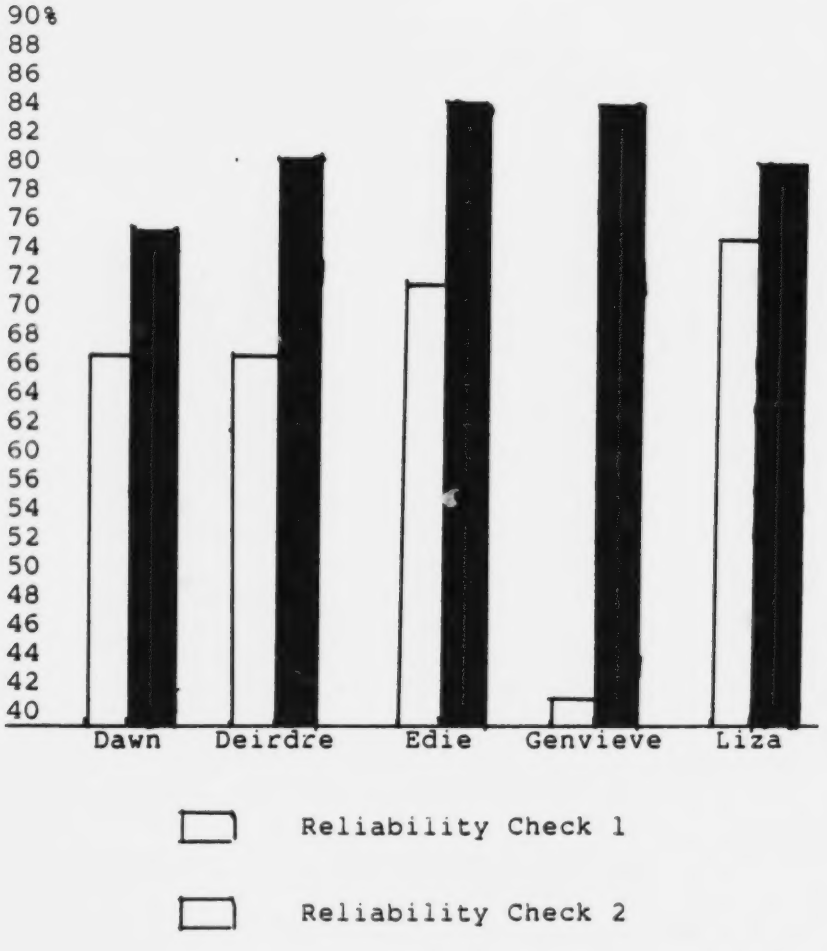
Dawn - "I never thought of this kind of picture-taking: ten of one child, while he's sleeping, from the back, his hands..."

This way of studying children and learning about them added another dimension, and they were becoming aware of non-verbal behaviors.

The competency scores indicate that they could demonstrate and describe observation methods, but were less adept at explaining and analyzing the importance and meaning of what was observed and recorded. They had learned the "how" but had difficulty with the "why." It would appear that the participants are concrete thinkers which has implications for training. Also, underlying the problems the participants experienced in explaining the meaning of behavior is their weak knowledge base. They inferred and interpreted the data they gathered in accord with feelings and folkways instead of firm child development knowledge.

Table 5.
Reliability Checklists Scores (Percent of Agreement)
(Appendix D)

Checklist
Does A see what B sees?



Participants had much more difficulty with event sampling.

Table 6.
Event Sampling
(Appendix D)

	Reliability Scores (Percent of Agreement)			
Participants	Event 1 (Conflict)	Event 2 (Considerateness)	Event 3 (Anxiety)	Average
Dawn	75%	50%	50%	58%
Deirdre	100%	25%	75%	67%
Edie	75%	100%	50%	75%
Genvieve	75%	75%	75%	75%
Liza	75%	75%	100%	83%
Average	80%	65%	70%	72%

Only Liza's performance, averaged for the three events, met the acceptable level of at least 80%. Looking at individual events, Liza for event 3, Deirdre for event 2, and Edie for event 2 achieved the acceptable level of success. Apparently, participants were better able to recognize and describe certain events but were not equally successful with

others. It may be that feelings, attitudes and values affected their abilities to observe, that for them the valences of particular events were different. For instance, Deirdre was completely successful with recording conflict, inept when it came to observing considerateness, but more skilled in relation to recounting anxiety events. Edie, on the other hand, was somewhat successful with conflict, completely successful with considerateness and weak in reporting anxiety events.

Examining these scores from another vantage point we find all participants had trouble identifying or adequately recording the antecedent aspects of an event. But all, with the exception of Deirdre, were able to describe the behavior extremely well. These findings are consistent with the writer's experience: child care workers typically respond to the behavior, are vaguely aware of the situations that trigger the behavior, and often, remember the consequences imperfectly.

Table 7.
Event Sampling
(Appendix D)

(Reliability Scores of Components)

Participants	DE	A	B	C
Dawn	67%	33%	100%	33%
Deirdre	67%	67%	67%	67%
Edie	100%	50%	100%	67%
Genvieve	67%	33%	100%	100%
Liza	100%	33%	100%	100%
Average	80%	43%	93%	73%

Key:
DE - Describing the Event.
A - Antecedents
B - Behavior
C - Consequence

Event sampling demanded more developed skills: Keen perception and an ability to capture the essence of an episode in concrete, graphic terms. And perhaps, in the midst of classroom activity, the recording tasks overwhelmed them:

> Deirdre: "It's hard, hard recording on the spot. You need to help a poor kid having a problem. This pulls me away, and then I make an effort to remember, keep a mental picture of things, you know, and put it together later."
>
> Edie: "...if we had the back-up we need - "staff awareness" I call it - to free you to take note of what children are doing..."
>
> Dawn to Liza: "Tell us how you do it."
> Liza: "Practice. I tune into specific behavior - aggressiveness, shyness. Jot down one, two, three words later. Involving other staff is something else. I have the aide observe along with me. The kids are on automatic pilot, of course. Then, when you get a chance, compare."

This practicum provided the staff with an opportunity to find new modes for thinking about individual children and the functioning of the group. Introduction to different-

ent ways to know children added dimension to their practice. Thus, these experiences evoked feelings of increased competency. These feelings, it was hoped, would keep the staff interested in continuing to observe and record.

The following table is an index of improvement derived from responses to Telephone Interview B (Appendix E) scored by two judges (the writer and a colleague) and compared to the scores obtained in Telephone Interview A (Appendix E).

Table 8.
Improvement Index
(Appendix F)

Summary: Scale	Interview A, Interview B	Q1	Q3	Q4	Average	Increment %
Dawn	A	1	1	1	1	
	B	2	3	3	2.6	1.6
Deirdre	A	2	3	2	2.3	
	B	3	5	4	4.0	1.7
Edie	A	1	2	2	1.6	
	B	2	2	3	2.3	.7
Genvieve	A	1	2	2	1.6	
	B	2	2	3	2.3	.7
Liza	A	1	2	2	1.6	
	B	3	4	4	3.6	2.0

The standard for achievement to indicate success was four of five participants attaining the level of four on scale Q1, Q3 and Q4. Only Deirdre and Liza met the standard for success, but only on two scales, not three. The increments of improvement were uniformly low. While it was hoped that the practicum would produce modest change in the direction of the integration of positive attitudes and the understanding of the necessity and value of observation, the results

were disappointing. Nevertheless, on scale 6, when asked to rate their improvement from 1 to 10 (Interview B, Q6, Appendix F) they all felt they had improved significantly:

Dawn: 7, definitely!

Deirdre: 8 plus.

Edie: 6 or 7; let's say 7.

Genevieve: 9! I took a giant step.

Liza: 7.

While these self-ratings may not be accurate, they represent how each of them would like to be functioning and consequently performance as child-watchers is likely to be improved as they perservere.

A related objective to the overall goal was to observe and record systematically. To address this objective the practicum participants arrived at a consensus regarding systematic observation using the Delphi Technique. (Appendix J). The group concurred that it was important to record every day, that the checklist should be used three times a week, event sampling twice a week and photography particularly when a new child entered the group or to record special occasions or notable happenings. Further, they agreed that once a month all of these records should be reviewed and utilized in preparing Progress Reports. (Appendix B). It is likely that this proposed schedule will exceed

their ability to carry it out, for they are still grappling with the participant-observer role.

Conclusion

The practicum was concerned with methods and procedures for improving the observation skills of child care workers. The results highlight the fact that observation is a skill developed over time. Moreover, the results brought into sharp focus the recognition that considerable guided practice is needed if mastery is to be achieved. Although the present practicum concentrated on learning to use three selected observational tools, fundamental to the very purpose of observing is the explanation of the behavior recorded. As a group and as individuals the participants consistently fell short in giving meaning to their observations. As noted above, the reason for their difficulties in interpretation can be laid to their uncertain knowledge base. It is important, then, that this knowledge base be strengthened by reviewing growth and development along with the discussion of observation techniques.

For thirteen weeks the group of five child care workers met once a week for two hours to explore and experiment, to report their experiences and to develop ways to proceed. They were urged to practice the target skills during the intervening week. Attendance was excellent, their being only one absence. But vacation schedules interrupted the

practicum, making it necessary to reschedule the second field experience for three of the participants. The concluding activities of the practicum also had to be delayed. These factors undoubtedly interferred with the retention and integration of learnings.

Although the sessions as devised seemed to be well accepted by the group the pace of presenting material needed to be slowed down to ensure mastery. Then too, even though the teaching was one-to-a-few and much learning occurred between and among participants, opportunities for one-to-one teaching (the purpose for scheduling individual conferences) probably should be expanded. Feedback, of course, is essential.

Motivation appeared to remain high throughout the duration of the practicum. They arrived early for group sessions and lingered afterwards. The materials and activities maintained their interest, and they eagerly sought opportunities to discuss their adventures in trying out their skills. The discussions were often spirited and reflected the participants' deep commitment to the children. Here structure was important, to keep to topic and task, otherwise the time would slip away as the group leaders talked volubly of children's antics.

Recommendations

The three observational techniques were a good match for the participants' level of skill, by and large. But

to improve the outcomes some additional changes are suggested. For example, it might be well to introduce the checklist gradually: first requiring the recording of one aspect (e.g., activity); then adding another aspect to be checked (e.g., affect); then, after careful presentation and thorough discussion adding the different elements of social participation.

Event sampling, a higher level skill, almost beyond the capabilities of the participants, yielded much information of a helpful nature, which the partipants attested to. For this reason, the child care workers need to continue to use the method. As individual group leaders perservered, their skills were refined. The richness of even a brief narrative, recalled and recorded after the incident occurred, added depth to the checklist or snapshot.

All participants found photography as a recording tool an invitation to understanding and used it to supplement the other recording techniques. They all responded to the aesthetic appeal of the color pictures, but also, complained of the cost. It would be worthwhile to explore the use of black and white film. They might find black and white pictures aesthetically pleasing and at the same time capable of adding to their understanding of the child being studied.

Interpersonal contacts, sharing experiences amongst themselves and with the writer, were of paramount importance.

These valued relationships supported the participant involvement in the project and helped them over the rough spots as they struggled with carrying out the observation and recording assignments.

Paraprofessionals often find learning new material or techniques a risk. The practicum made it possible for them to have direct experience with systematic observation and provided the creative stimulus necessary to motivate them to be risk-takers.

And although the improvement was not as great as anticipated, all of the participants now have a clearer idea of the deficits and a clear idea of where they need to go in order to become expert child watchers.

Dissemination

The participants - Dawn, Deirdre, Edie, Genvieve and Liza - gained a modicum of skill in using the three techniques to observe and record the behavior of children. They are pleased with their increased skills and readily accepted the challenge to teach what they had been learning to the five group leaders who were not part of the practicum. And in the teaching they have a chance to fine-tune their skills.

Plans are now underway to share the experiences and results of this practicum with the Head Start staff. Since these teachers all have degrees it will be interesting and informative to compare and contrast their progress with the paraprofessionls of the Day Care staff.

References

Anselmo, D. (1977). Vignettes of child activity. Childhood Education. 53, 133-136.

Bailey, G. D. (1977). Self-made classroom observation instruments: An Aid to self-assessment. Educational Technology. March 1977, pp. 49-51.

Bruce, D. (1979). A Theory of information processing. Educational Research Quarterly. 3, 66-77.

Cliatt, M.P. (1980). Play: A Window into a Child's Life. Childhood Education. 56.

Fein, L. B. (1978). Stop the Action: Recording with photography. Young Children. July 1978, pp. 41-45.

Linder, R. (1976). Learning to identify children's interests. Childhood Education. 52, 296-299.

McNair, K. (1979). Capturing in-flight decisions: Thoughts while teaching. Educational Research Quarterly. 3, 26-42.

Morine-Dershimer, G. (1979). How teachers see their pupils. Educational Research Quarterly. 3, 43-52.

Nelson, L. S. (1982). The development and assessment for teaching narrative techniques to child development students. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1982).

Phinney, J. S. (1982). Observing children: Ideas for teachers. Young Children. , 16-24.

Quisenberry, N. L. (1979). Using observation to improve your teaching. Childhood Education. 55, 313-317.

Raskin, L. M., Taylor, W. J., Kerckhoff, F. G. (1977). The Teacher as observer for assessment: A Guideline. Young Children. March 1977, pp. 339-344.

Strahan, D. B. (1983). Teacher and ethnography: Observational source for information for education. Elementary School Journal. 83, 194-203.

References (Continued)

Williams, S. S. (1978). An Observation system for the analysis of classroom communication. Clearing House. 51, 346-348.

Ziller, R. C., Vera H., Camacho de Santoga C. (1981). Federico: Understanding a child through auto-photography. Childhood Education. 57, 271-273.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

END OF THE MONTH REPORTS: SUMMARY AND COMPARISONS

Appendix A: Summary, End of Month Report.

Random Sample (N20) of 56 reports submitted by 10 centers 9/86 - 12/86, 8 centers 7/86 - 8/86, references to activities compared to references to individual children.

Highlights of the Month:

Group Activities (e.g., Related our walks in the park to weekly reader about animals that hibernate...) 29 Total

Individual Children (e.g., Ava had a birthday party, candles, colorful napkins, laughter, singing!) 5 Total

Goals:

Group Goals (e.g., work on children's ability to share). 36 Total

Goals for Individual Children (e.g., Help Jesse with separation). 4 Total

Staff Meetings:

Program Activities (e.g., Discussion of Halloween Activities). 21 Total

Topics (e.g., Fighting, Crying, Independence). 10 Total

Procedures (e.g., Five Drills Preparation for Monitor) Transitions. 15 Total

Individual Children (C's bossiness).

Highlights of Month	29:5
Goals	36:4
Staff meetings	*46.3

*(Activities, Topics, Procedures combined)

111:12

APPENDIX B

PROGRESS REPORT, EXAMPLES

APPENDIX C

12 ITEM EVALUATION INSTRUMENT

Evaluation Rating Form

	1	2	3	4	5
1.	Cannot analyze the importance of observation.				Can clearly analyze the importance of observation.
2.	Cannot identify factors that affect observation.				Can identify the salient factors that affect observation.
3.	Cannot explain the role of interpretation in observation.				Can clearly explain the role of interpretation in obsertion.
	Cannot describe the characteristics of (rate each separately) as methods of recording data.				Can fully describe x as a method of recording data.
4.	Checklists				
5.	Event Sampling				
6.	Photography				
	Cannot identify the advantages and disadvantages of the three methods:				Can identify the significant advantages of -

7. Checklist

8. Event Sampling

9. Photography

1	2	3	4	5
Cannot demonstrate the appropriate use of two of the methods.				Skillfuliy demonstrates the appropriate use of two of the methods.

10. a.

11. b.

12.

1	2	3	4	5
Cannot satisfactorily explain the meaning of behavior observed in at least one of the methods demonstrated above.				Fully and cogently explains the meaning of behavior observed in both methods demonstrated.

APPENDIX D

SAMPLE RELIABILITY CHECK FORM

Reliability Check Matrix

Children's Activity Checklist

(Does Observer I see what Observer II sees?)

Date:_____ Observer I_____ Reliability #1
Group Leader Check #2
Center: _____ Observer II_____ Circle #3

Compare Observer I's checklist with Observer's II's.
A = agree.
D = disagree.

Name of Child	Social Inter-Action	Activity/ Material	Verbal/ Non-Verbal	Affect	Totals A	Totals D	Summary
1.							Total A
2.							Total A&D
3.							x 100 =
4.							% of
5.							agreement
6.							Social
7.							Inter-
8.							action
9.							%
10.							Activity/
11.							Material
12.							%
13.							Verbal/
14.							Non-Verbal
15.							%
16.							Affect
17.							%
18.							
19.							Totals
20.							%

Totals A_____

D_____

Note patterns or trends_____

Follow up?_____

Reliability Check Matrix

Event Sampling

Date:_____ Observer I_____
Group Leader

Center _____ Observer II _____

Event Sample: Circle Appropriate Subject

1. Aggression
2. Prosocial Behavior
3. Play events (imitation, exploration, testing, world construction).
4. Other

Compare Observer I's Event Sampling Report with Observer II's.

A = agree: D = disagree.

1. Circle # of events both observers describe.	1	2	3	4	Totals A	D
Do they agree, disagree?						
2. Antecedants						
3. Behavior						
4. Consequences						
Totals A						
Totals B						

Summary: $\frac{A}{A\&D} \times 100 = ____\%$

Event 1 ____%
2 ____%
3 ____%
4 ____%

Total ____%

Comments:

APPENDIX E

TELEPHONE INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRES

Telephone Interview A

(To be completed prior to the workshops on Observation and Recording Techniques.)

Purpose: To identify the child care workers' current level of practice and associated knowledge base with respect to methods of observation.

Lead: So much of our record keeping depends upon watching and keeping track of what kids do. I'd like to talk with you about how you do this.

1. I know you are aware that there are many ways to study kids: from watching and making a mental note of what kids do, to timing their activities using a stop watch, to writing down everything a child does, minute by minute, during a certain activity. What ways do you keep track of things like children's interests, their problems, their accomplishments?

2. What works best for you? Do you have a system?

3. Tell me about any problems or difficulties you have come up against when you observe and record children's behavior?

4. What suggestions do you have to help us become better child watchers, better reporters?

Telephone Interview B

(To be completed after the workshops on Observation and Recording Techniques have been concluded.)

Purpose: To identify the child care workers' perceptions of the usefulness of the observation techniques and their increased skills.

Lead: Now that we've completed the workshops I'd like to think with you about the outcomes...

1. Were any of the techniques new to you.

2. What do you think about the usefulness of the techniques we studied? Are any of them really helpful to you in the understanding of children? If so, how?

3. How will you be able to fit these new techniques into your schedule?

4. In our first interview, you said that you found _x_ to be a problem when you observe and record children's behavior. Did any of the three techniques we used clear up these problems? Tell me about it.

5. What would work better? How can we work toward better observing and recording? What would you suggest to other child care workers?

6. Do you think you've become a better child watcher, a better reporter - more adept at observing, more skilled at recording? In what ways? On a scale of one to ten how would you rate your improvement?

APPENDIX F

IMPROVEMENT INDEX

Procedure:

Interview A -

- Read through protocols.
- Read answers to questions 1 and 2 of a participant and rate on Scale Q1 considering the answers together, not separately. Continue with the other four participants.
- Read through answers to question 3 and rate on Scale Q3.
- Read through answers to Q4 and rate on Q4.

Interview B -

- Read through protocols.
- Read answers to questions 1, 2, 3 of a participant and rate on Scale Q1, considering the answers to questions 1, 2 and 3 as if they were one answer. Continue with other four participants.
- Read answers to question 4 and rate on Scale Q3.
- Read answers to question 5 and rate on Scale Q4.
- Tally scores from answers to question 6.

Scale Q1 (Interview A, Question 1, 2; (Interview B, Question 1, 2, 3).

1	2	3	4	5
No system. Keeps facts re. children in head.	Records children's progress as needed.	Records about 2x per week. Reads CD and health records.	Makes notes at end of each day (Event Samples and logs anecdotal jottings.)	Purposefully uses a variety of selected methods to observe and record on a daily basis.

Scale Q3 (Interview A, Question 3; Interview B, Question 4)

1	2	3	4	5
Too many problems; cannot observe nor record.	Now and then manage to observe despite problems.	Sometimes there are difficulties that get in the way, but I am trying.	In most instances I surmount the problems and observe and record regularly.	Have worked out problems so observation and recording is part of my routine.

Improvement Index (Continued)

Scale Q4 (Interview A, Question 4; Interview B, Question 5)

1	2	3	4	5
No suggestions.	One or two ideas.	Tentative suggestions which reflect an interest in being helpful.	Has formulated suggestions which come from weighing her experiences in observing and recording.	Thoughful, useful suggestions and ideas which she is eager to try out.

Summary: Interview A				
Scale	Q1	Q3	Q4	Average
Participant 1				
Participant 2				
Participant 3				
Participant 4				
Participant 5				
Average				

APPENDIX G

PROJECTED TIME TABLE AND ACTUAL TIME TABLE

	Projected Time Table	Actual Time Table
Week 1 - May 4	The Importance of Observation in Child Development Programs.	The Importance of Observation in Child Development Programs.
Week 2 - May 11	The Observation Process.	Telephone Inviews-A.
Week 3 - May 18	Three Approaches to Observation: Photography, Checklists, Event-Sampling.	The Observation Process.
Week 4 - May 26	Individual Conferences with Participations	Two Approaches to Observation: Event-Sampling, Checklists.
Week 5 - June 1	Field Experience - Photography*. Checklists. AM Session: Using-photography and checklists. PM Session: Discussion and Critique.	Photography as a Recording Tool.
Week 6 - June 8	Field Experience - Event Sampling AM Session - Using event sampling. PM Session: Discussion and Critique.	Review of Three Observation tools and Partens Theory of Social Participation. (Evaluation Matrix)
Week 7 - June 15	Explanation and Inferences.	Field Experience - Photography*, Checklists. AM Session: Using photography and checklists. PM Session: Discussion and Critique.

	Projected Time Table	Actual Time Table
Week 8 - June 22	On-site Visits: Reliability Checks (1)	Field Experience - Event Sampling AM Session: Using event-sampling. PM Session - Discussions and Critique. Note: only 2 participants attend.)
	Group Session	Group Session
Week 9 July 6	Problems in Interpretation Writer: Telephone conferences.	Problems - Observing and Recording. (Note: D.D. on vacation.) Writer: Telephone Conferences.
Week 10 - July 13	Independent Classroom-Observation Writer: Reliability Checks. (2) Observation Pairs: Reliability Checks.	On-site visit to Classrooms. Observation-Conference. Questionnaire: What do we mean be systematic observation.
Week 11 - July 20	Presentation of Data (demonstration of competence). Writer - Individual Conferences. Reliability Check - 3.	Searching for Meaning Writer: Reliability Check 2. (Note: D. D. on vacation.)
Week 12 July 27	Presentation of Data continued.	Vacation: D.D., G.K., E.M., L.T. Week 12 "Reprise." 8/27 Concensus: What do we mean by systematic observation? Group Sessions: 8/28 Inferring, Interpreting, Evaluating.

*Polaroid Camera.

Projected Time Table (continued)

Actual Time Table (continued) Group Sessions:

Week 13 - Make-up

9/1 Site 2: Visatation, D.A., E.M., D.D. Event Sampling, Photography.

9/2 Presentation of Data 1.

9/3 Presentation of Data 2.

9/4 Telephone Interviews B.

APPENDIX H

EXCERPT FROM PRACTICUM LOG

Excerpts from Practicum Log - Week of May 26 - On-site Visit - Center #2

Liza begins to discuss her observation experiences, describing the conflict events she has recorded. The description evolves into a long lament concerning the aide's disagreement about Liza's management of conflict.

Concerning using the checklists - she is exasperated about the fluidity of the group. "I begin checking off the groups making collages and before I finish they have drifted off to the housekeeping corner."

Busy week completing contract procedures so remaining on-site visits must be abandoned and telephone interview substituted:

Edie - I'm doing all right. But just let me sit down with my clipboard and the kids are all over me.

Deidre - (enthusiastic and voluble as usual) I never thought I could find the time but I do, I do.

Dawn - I messed up one or two sheets but I'm on a roll now.

Genevieve - Let me tell you about my events. Most of them - the conflicts - happen in the morning. Funny, isn't it?

Group Meeting -

Before 1 P.M. - all but Genevieve have already assembled eager to begin. Unusual - typically they are late for meetings.

We talk easily for a few moments as I distribute the summer schedule forms. Deidre gathers copies of hand-prints 1 and 2 and tells the others, "All in a nutshell." Dawn asks to present her Q-sort. She has her notebook open and is ready to begin. She explains her groupings and makes the comment about four aggressive boys, "Those four will never change". This sparks a flurry of remarks about the stability of personality, the capacity for change.

Liza has sorted her children several ways. "It depends on what you're looking at. What's uppermost in your catalog of concerns."

Genevive is eager to share her sorting categories. She remembers with a laugh, "I just couldn't group these girls except as whiney, dependent kids. Now since I'm looking, really looking close ..." Much discussion of temperment and the impact of experience.

Shift to discussion of conflict situations. (Event Sampling.) Explanation of how recording using the ABC format clarifies the observation. Questions and comments are scarce so I nudge here and there with leading questions and probes which serve to give them a chance to look again at

the situation and the actors - and to wonder about causes. They are beginning to analyze, to look for causes, to consider antecedents of behavior.

Quick review of checklists as a method for observing. Discussion of the term "affect." Refer again to the graphs showing their children's activity picked up from 5 of their checklists.

Foreshadow the use of photography as a recording method. Buzz of interest. Liza and Dawn often use the camera in their programs, but had not considered photography as a bonafide technique for recording. Genevive raises the question of cost. Liza reminds her that petty cash will take care of it.

Before leaving they settle down to prepare the Handprint - "A Q-sort is helpful because ...Oh help me out," says Deidre.

"Because it makes you look at what kids are like," finishes Genevive.

Liza: "Why don't we go round the table each one saying what we picked-up - I mean - learned today. Then we can..."

"Rearrange it then, once we have some of the points," suggests Genevive.

Edie - "That's good."

Dawn - "O-kay by me."

APPENDIX I

SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP: HAND-PRINT #5

APPENDIX J

Liza

EVALUATION MATRIX

	Feasibility: Can I do this?	Solvability: Does this help solve my observation problem?	Desirability: How does this contribute to my overall program?
Checklist	Yes	It allows me to observe more.	It is a more accurate record than depending upon recall and it involves the total group.
Event Sample	Yes, but not easily.	It puts me in closer contact with what I am observing.	If compared to other events in other places, it can broaden viewpoints, but it is basically news for the moment.
Photography as a recording tool.	Yes	It helps me have a closer look at what would have only been momentary.	If the pictures are used for study, they can be helpful. They also are good for display for the children.

Additional comments concerning observing and recording: I find the checklist a helpful tool for planning and discussing the class as a whole and a child in general.

Other suggestions:

APPENDIX K

QUESTIONNAIRE: SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SYSTEMATIC OBSERVATION?"

Goal: To observe and record systematically.*
Objective: To make writing down what I see children doing part of my regular classroom routine.
Assumptions:
1. Observing and recording is a worthwhile, necessary activity.
2. Stumbling blocks to observing and recording have been overcome.

Please answer the following:

In any one week how often should a checklist be used?

How often should event sampling be done?

When should photography as a recording tool be used?

Do you have any suggestions as to how observation and recording tasks should be shared with other staff members?

Any other comments?

*Systematic: A procedure or activity carried out with organized regularity.